

Introduction - Grade 6 English-Language Arts

The following released test questions are taken from the Grade 6 English-Language Arts Standards Test. This test is one of the California Standards Tests administered as part of the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program under policies set by the State Board of Education.

All questions on the California Standards Tests are evaluated by committees of content experts, including teachers and administrators, to ensure their appropriateness for measuring the California academic content standards in Grade 6 English-Language Arts. In addition to content, all items are reviewed and approved to ensure their adherence to the principles of fairness and to ensure no bias exists with respect to characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, and language.

This document contains released test questions from the California Standards Test forms in 2003. First on the pages that follow are lists of the standards assessed on the Grade 6 English-Language Arts Test. Next are released passages and test questions. Following the questions is a table that gives the correct answer for each question, the content standard that each question is measuring, and the year each question last appeared on the test.

The following table lists each strand/reporting cluster, the number of items that appear on the exam, and the number of released test questions that appear in this document.

STRAND/REPORTING CLUSTER	NUMBER OF QUESTIONS ON EXAM	NUMBER OF RELEASED TEST QUESTIONS
• Word Analysis	13	4
• Reading Comprehension	17	3
• Literary Response and Analysis	12	4
• Writing Strategies	17	4
• Written Conventions	16	4
TOTAL	75	19

In selecting test questions for release, three criteria are used: (1) the questions adequately cover a selection of the academic content standards assessed on the Grade 6 English-Language Arts Test; (2) the questions demonstrate a range of difficulty; and (3) the questions present a variety of ways standards can be assessed. These released test questions do not reflect all of the ways the standards may be assessed. Released test questions will not appear on future tests.

For more information about the California Standards Tests, visit the California Department of Education's Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/statetests/star/> or <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/resources.asp>.



READING

The Reading portion of the Grade 6 California English-Language Arts Standards Test has three strands/reporting clusters: Word Analysis, Reading Comprehension, and Literary Response and Analysis. Each of these strands/clusters is described below.

The Word Analysis Strand/Cluster

The following four California English-Language Arts content standards are included in the Word Analysis strand/cluster and are represented in this booklet by four test questions for grade 6. These questions represent only some ways in which these standards may be assessed on the Grade 6 California English-Language Arts Standards Test.

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- | | |
|---------------|---|
| 6RW1.0 | WORD ANALYSIS, FLUENCY, AND SYSTEMATIC VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT: Students use their knowledge of word origins and word relationships, as well as historical and literary context clues, to determine the meaning of specialized vocabulary and to understand the precise meaning of grade-level-appropriate words. |
| <hr/> | |
| 6RW1.2 | Vocabulary and Concept Development: Identify and interpret figurative language and words with multiple meanings. |
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| 6RW1.3 | Vocabulary and Concept Development: Recognize the origins and meanings of frequently used foreign words in English and use these words accurately in speaking and writing. |
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| 6RW1.4 | Vocabulary and Concept Development: Monitor expository text for unknown words or words with novel meanings by using word, sentence, and paragraph clues to determine meaning. |
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| 6RW1.5 | Vocabulary and Concept Development: Understand and explain “shades of meaning” in related words (e.g., <i>softly</i> and <i>quietly</i>). |
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The Reading Comprehension Strand/Cluster

The following eight California English-Language Arts content standards are included in the Reading Comprehension strand/cluster and are represented in this booklet by three test questions for grade 6. These questions represent only some ways in which these standards may be assessed on the Grade 6 California English-Language Arts Standards Test.

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- 6RC2.0 READING COMPREHENSION (FOCUS ON INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS):** Students read and understand grade-level-appropriate material. They describe and connect the essential ideas, arguments, and perspectives of the text by using their knowledge of text structure, organization, and purpose. The selections in *Recommended Readings in Literature, Kindergarten Through Grade Eight* illustrate the quality and complexity of the materials to be read by students. In addition, by grade eight, students read one million words annually on their own, including a good representation of grade-level-appropriate narrative and expository text (e.g., classic and contemporary literature, magazines, newspapers, online information). In grade six, students continue to make progress toward this goal.
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- 6RC2.1 Structural Features of Informational Materials:** Identify the structural features of popular media (e.g., newspapers, magazines, online information) and use the features to obtain information.
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- 6RC2.2 Structural Features of Informational Materials:** Analyze text that uses the compare-and-contrast organizational pattern.
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- 6RC2.3 Comprehension and Analysis of Grade-Level-Appropriate Text:** Connect and clarify main ideas by identifying their relationships to other sources and related topics.
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- 6RC2.4 Comprehension and Analysis of Grade-Level-Appropriate Text:** Clarify an understanding of texts by creating outlines, logical notes, summaries, or reports.
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- 6RC2.5 Comprehension and Analysis of Grade-Level-Appropriate Text:** Follow multiple-step instructions for preparing applications (e.g., for a public library card, bank savings account, sports club, league membership).
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- 6RC2.6 Expository Critique:** Determine the adequacy and appropriateness of the evidence for an author's conclusions.
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- 6RC2.7 Expository Critique:** Make reasonable assertions about a text through accurate, supporting citations.
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- 6RC2.8 Expository Critique:** Note instances of unsupported inferences, fallacious reasoning, persuasion, and propaganda in text.
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The Literary Response and Analysis Strand/Cluster

The following eight California English-Language Arts content standards are included in the Literary Response and Analysis strand/cluster and are represented in this booklet by four test questions for grade 6. These questions represent only some ways in which these standards may be assessed on the Grade 6 California English-Language Arts Standards Test.

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- 6RL3.0 LITERARY RESPONSE AND ANALYSIS:** Students read and respond to historically or culturally significant works of literature that reflect and enhance their studies of history and social science. They clarify the ideas and connect them to other literary works. The selections in *Recommended Readings in Literature, Kindergarten Through Grade Eight* illustrate the quality and complexity of the materials to be read by students.
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- 6RL3.1 Structural Features of Literature:** Identify the forms of fiction and describe the major characteristics of each form.
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- 6RL3.2 Narrative Analysis of Grade-Level-Appropriate Text:** Analyze the effect of the qualities of the character (e.g., courage or cowardice, ambition or laziness) on the plot and the resolution of the conflict.
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- 6RL3.3 Narrative Analysis of Grade-Level-Appropriate Text:** Analyze the influence of setting on the problem and its resolution.
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- 6RL3.4 Narrative Analysis of Grade-Level-Appropriate Text:** Define how tone or meaning is conveyed in poetry through word choice, figurative language, sentence structure, line length, punctuation, rhythm, repetition, and rhyme.
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- 6RL3.5 Narrative Analysis of Grade-Level-Appropriate Text:** Identify the speaker and recognize the difference between first- and third-person narration (e.g., autobiography compared with biography).
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- 6RL3.6 Narrative Analysis of Grade-Level-Appropriate Text:** Identify and analyze features of themes conveyed through characters, actions, and images.
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- 6RL3.7 Narrative Analysis of Grade-Level-Appropriate Text:** Explain the effects of common literary devices (e.g., symbolism, imagery, metaphor) in a variety of fictional and nonfictional texts.
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- 6RL3.8 Literary Criticism:** Critique the credibility of characterization and the degree to which a plot is contrived or realistic (e.g., compare use of fact and fantasy in historical fiction).
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WRITING

The Writing portion of the Grade 6 California English-Language Arts Standards Test has two strands/reporting clusters: Writing Strategies and Written Conventions. Each of these strands/clusters is described below.

The Writing Strategies Strand/Cluster

The following five California English-Language Arts content standards are included in the Writing Strategies strand/cluster and are represented in this booklet by four test questions for grade 6. These questions represent only some ways in which these standards may be assessed on the Grade 6 California English-Language Arts Standards Test.

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- 6WS1.0 WRITING STRATEGIES:** Students write clear, coherent, and focused essays. The writing exhibits students' awareness of the audience and purpose. Essays contain formal introductions, supporting evidence, and conclusions. Students progress through the stages of the writing process as needed.
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- 6WS1.1 Organization and Focus:** Choose the form of writing (e.g., personal letter, letter to the editor, review, poem, report, narrative) that best suits the intended purpose.
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- 6WS1.2 Organization and Focus:** Create multiple-paragraph expository compositions:
- 2) Develop the topic with supportive details and precise verbs, nouns, and adjectives to paint a visual image in the mind of the reader.
 - 3) Conclude with a detailed summary linked to the purpose of composition.
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- 6WS1.3 Organization and Focus:** Use a variety of effective and coherent organizational patterns, including comparison and contrast; organization by categories; and arrangement by spatial order, order of importance, or climactic order.
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- 6WS1.4 Research and Technology:** Use organizational features of electronic text (e.g., bulletin boards, databases, keyword searches, e-mail addresses) to locate information.
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- 6WS1.6 Evaluation and Revision:** Revise writing to improve the organization and consistency of ideas within and between paragraphs.
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The Written Conventions Strand/Cluster

The following five California English-Language Arts content standards are included in the Written Conventions strand/cluster and are represented in this booklet by four test questions for grade 6. These questions represent only some ways in which these standards may be assessed on the Grade 6 California English-Language Arts Standards Test.

6WC1.0 WRITTEN AND ORAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE CONVENTIONS: Students write and speak with a command of standard English conventions appropriate to this grade level.

6WC1.1 Sentence Structure: Use simple, compound, and compound-complex sentences; use effective coordination and subordination of ideas to express complete thoughts.

6WC1.2 Grammar: Identify and properly use indefinite pronouns and present perfect, past perfect, and future perfect verb tenses; ensure that verbs agree with compound subjects.

6WC1.3 Punctuation: Use colons after the salutation in business letters, semicolons to connect independent clauses, and commas when linking two clauses with a conjunction in compound sentences.

6WC1.4 Capitalization: Use correct capitalization.

6WC1.5 Spelling: Spell frequently misspelled words correctly (e.g., *their*, *they're*, *there*).

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Bird of Dreams

1 At night in dream I travel from my bed.
2 On wing of light I soar across vast skies
3 Where colors swirl and dance, and mingle and soar,
4 To far beyond the veil, where Phoenix flies.

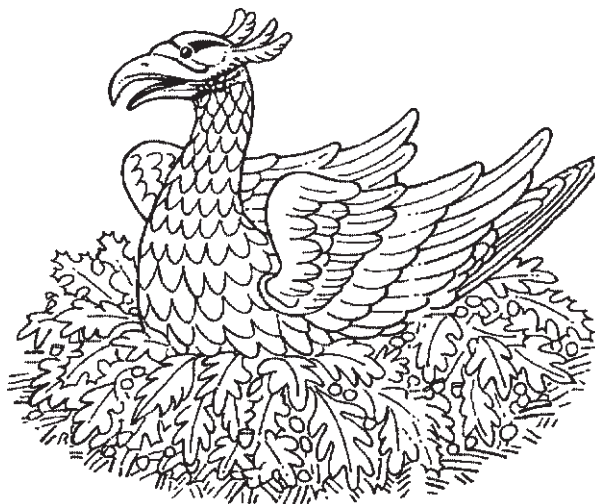
5 The Phoenix is a wondrous bird of dreams.
6 Each five hundred years she builds a nest,
7 Piling feathers, branches, twigs, and leaves—
8 Now will she lay her eggs and sit to rest?

9 But no! The Phoenix strikes a blazing spark
10 And sets her cozy nesting place afire!
11 She dives in flight into the dancing flames!
12 Why does she go into the flaming pyre?

13 There is no need to weep, for all is well.
14 For her the pyre's fiery heat and flame
15 Burn away the years. She is reborn!
16 Her radiant, shining youth she doth reclaim.

17 The pyre burns down to ash, and all is still.
18 And from the ashen pile, her eyes alight,
19 The Phoenix rises up into the sky,
20 Renewed, with feathers luminous and bright!

21 And so this night, perchance my dreams will go
22 With wondrous Phoenix rising in the sky,
23 To soar among the planets and the stars,
24 Deep in the night to fly and fly and fly!



- 1** Which words from the poem's first and last stanzas tell the reader that these stanzas are written in the first person?
- A Phoenix, sky
 - B night, dreams
 - C beyond, across
 - D I, my
- 2** In this poem, what is *both* destructive and creative?
- A fire
 - B ash
 - C light
 - D air
- 3** The Phoenix could *best* represent a person who
- A makes a promise and then breaks it.
 - B loses everything and starts over.
 - C wants only to be carefree and have fun.
 - D lives a life of habit and routine.
- 4** Which words from the poem are intended to provide a sense that the poem was written long ago?
- A soar, fly
 - B branches, twigs
 - C flame, burn
 - D doth, perchance

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Read the following letter to the editor taken from a local newspaper.

Letter to the Editor

- 1 A debate is currently raging in our town. Should we allow the Odeon Triplex Cinema to be constructed at the Havenswood Shopping Center? There is just one large lot left to build on, and the theater would use up all of that space. Some people are thrilled at the idea of finally having our own movie theater in Havenswood. Others would rather travel ten miles north to the nearest theater in Gadway in order to keep our quiet town the way it is. They say it is enough to have Marvin's Movie Video Rentals in the shopping center. As a Havenswood citizen and small-business owner, I would like to express my opinion on this issue.
- 2 There are certainly benefits to renting videos. For one thing, you can plan your own movie-watching schedule by renting and viewing movies when it is convenient for you. You can relax on your cozy couch, grab snacks from your kitchen, and take a break whenever you need one. You can also talk to friends or family members who are watching the movie with you without bothering any strangers seated nearby. In addition, it is a less expensive way to view a movie compared to going to a theater, especially if more than one person is watching the video.
- 3 On the other hand, seeing a movie in a theater is an experience all its own. For one thing, you can see the movie on a wide screen as the filmmaker intended. To be viewed on a television screen, a film must be changed in some way to make it smaller. One way is known as the "pan-and-scan" method, which involves removing some of the details in the picture. This results in an image that is not complete. The other way, called "letterboxing," keeps the image the way it is on the big screen, with one annoying exception: because the big-screen version is wide, the same picture on a television screen must be long and narrow, with black strips above and below it.
- 4 Another issue is sound. The sound from a television, even when it's attached to a home stereo system, cannot compare to the sound system in a movie theater. Your experience of a movie improves when you can clearly hear all of the sounds, loud and soft. Furthermore, at home, viewing companions often talk during a movie, which makes you miss out on what's happening in the film.
- 5 Besides, having a movie theater will not mean that you can't still go to Marvin's and rent a movie! You will just have a choice that you didn't have before. Isn't it time for Havenswood residents to enjoy a little progress?

A Concerned Citizen

- 5** Read this sentence from the editorial.

There is just one large lot left to build on, and the theater would use up all of that space.

In this sentence, the word lot means

- A a great amount.
- B a complete group.
- C a section of land.
- D a result of chance.

- 6** Read this sentence from the editorial.

They say it is enough to have Marvin's Movie Video Rentals in the shopping center.

This statement would be made stronger by adding which of these sentences?

- A After all, Marvin's store stocks thousands of the latest video releases.
- B After all, videos rented at the store do not have to be returned the same day.
- C After all, the management at the store is friendly and helpful.
- D After all, Marvin's store occupies 2,000 square feet at the shopping center.

- 7** The author's argument in paragraph 2 that renting videos is "less expensive" than going to the movies would have been stronger if she had included

- A a newspaper story on the expense of managing a theater.
- B a quotation from a moviegoer regarding the cost of tickets.
- C a chart comparing theater ticket prices to movie rental prices.
- D a statement from the owner of the video store about his rental fees.

- 8** Which of the following sources would provide the *best* evidence to support the main idea in paragraph 3?

- A an editorial page about popular movies
- B a magazine about the history of moviemaking
- C a story about a famous filmmaker
- D a book about changing movies into videos

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The following questions are not about a passage. Read and answer each question.

9 Read this sentence.

At dinnertime Abuelita said, "It's time to put the horses back into the _____."

Which Spanish word meaning "enclosure" can be used to complete the sentence?

- A bronco
- B corral
- C rodeo
- D lasso

10 Which French expression would be *most* appropriate to say to someone about to go on a journey?

- A A la carte!
- B Bon voyage!
- C Merci beaucoup!
- D Bon appétit!

11 A conversation can turn into an argument in the same way that a discussion can become

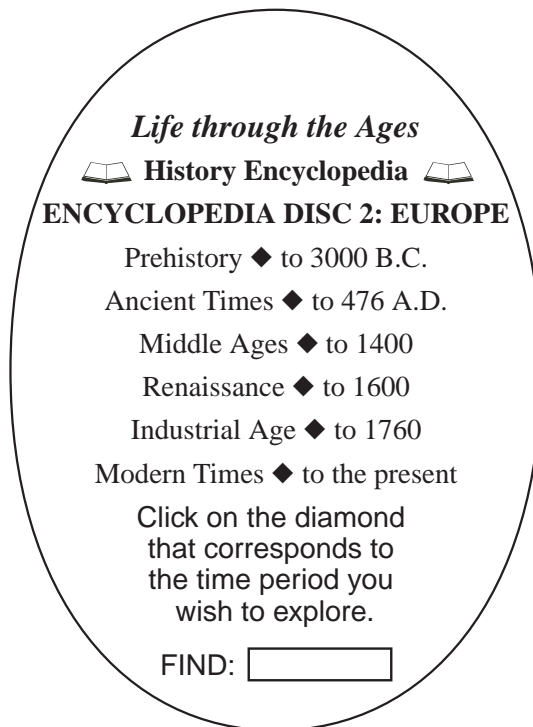
- A a privilege.
- B an examination.
- C a debate.
- D a quotation.

Miguel's teacher has asked the students to conduct research about what it was like to live in another time and to write about what they learn. Miguel wants to write about boys who became knights in the Middle Ages.

12 To complete this assignment, Miguel will write a

- A book review.
- B narrative poem.
- C factual report.
- D persuasive essay.

13 Miguel used this CD-ROM encyclopedia to help him research his topic.



To find information about his topic, Miguel should use the mouse to click on the diamond next to

- A 476 A.D.
- B 1400.
- C 1600.
- D 1760.

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Here is Miguel's first draft, which may contain errors.

From Boyhood to Knighthood

- 1 In tales of medieval days, we are told that brave knights wore shining armor and rode beautiful horses. They carried bright, sharp weapons. In these stories, fair maidens in distress are rescued by these knights, who seem to appear mysteriously out of the mist. The truth is that the knights of the Middle Ages did not just appear from thin air.
- 2 In times of war, a young man who fought bravely on a battlefield could become a knight on the site where he had demonstrated his courage. A king or knight could tap him on the shoulder with a sword, giving him this title of honor.
- 3 In peacetime, becoming a knight was a more lengthy process. A boy began this training when he was about seven years old. He went to live in the home of a noble family, where he served as a page. He ran errands for the family, served their meals, and learned to ride horses and handle small weapons. He also learned a code of polite behavior that was as important as learning to fight.
- 4 When a page was about fourteen years old, he became a squire. A squire served a knight who was called his lord. He took care of his lord's horse and helped him practice hunting and fighting skills. If battle broke out, a squire rode beside his lord to the end.
- 5 Most squires were knighted by the time they were twenty-one years old. If not knighted on a battlefield, the squire might be knighted in an elaborate ceremony called dubbing. He bathed, cut his hair short, and prayed all night in a chapel. In the morning, he knelt before his lord who tapped him on both shoulders with a sword. The lord then gave him the spurs and sword of a knight.
- 6 Either in battle or in a dubbing ceremony, the squire rose from his knees as a knight. He promised to use his bravery and fighting skills to defend the weak and protect his homeland.

- 14** Which sentence could Miguel *best* add at the end of the first paragraph of his report?
- A Knights used strong horses to help them fight battles.
 - B There probably were knights in other historical periods, too.
 - C A man was not simply born a knight; he had to earn such a title.
 - D Women could not become knights unless they pretended to be men.
- 15** If Miguel wants to write to his cousin in Mexico about what he is learning, he should write a
- A letter to the editor.
 - B personal letter.
 - C letter of request.
 - D business letter.

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The following is a rough draft of a student's report, which may contain errors.

Sequoias

- 1 The sequoia is a redwood tree that was named in honor of a Native-American chief called Sequoyah. This tree is one of the largest living things on Earth. It can grow nearly 400 feet high and 30 feet across. The sequoia is also one of the longest-living things on Earth. One tree can live as long as 2,000 years. A close relative, the giant sequoia, may live 3,000 or more years.
- 2 There is evidence that suggests that sequoias were found in many parts of the Northern Hemisphere during ancient times. Today they can be found in groves along the coast of northern California and southern Oregon. They grow only in altitudes below 3,300 feet.
- 3 The sequoia's trunk can rise about 100 feet without a single branch. As the sequoia ages, its lower branches fall away. The dark brown bark of the sequoia can be as thick as 12 inches. It has deep furrows, or rows, in it, and it is very spongy. The sequoia's thick bark helps the tree survive forest fires. The bark also helps the tree resist damage from insects.
- 4 If a sequoia falls over or is cut down, it begins to grow again soon afterward. It does this by producing new sprouts from the remaining stump. However, it takes hundreds of years for the new trees to reach full size. Every year many sequoia trees are cut down to make lumber. Redwood lumber is popular because it has an attractive color and lasts a long time. Redwood lumber is used for fence posts, paneling, shingles, and furniture. There are not as many sequoias as there used to be, but people are working to preserve more of these incredible trees.
- 5 Although these trees are cut for lumber, many sequoias can be found in pertected groves within California's national parks. Redwood National Park, in Northwestern California, has among its thousands of acres of redwoods the tallest known sequoia, which rises 367.5 feet into the air.

- 16** Read this sentence from paragraph 2.

There is evidence that suggests that sequoias were found in many parts of the Northern Hemisphere during ancient times.

What is the correct way to spell the underlined word?

- A segests
- B suggests
- C seggests
- D Leave as is.

- 17** Read this sentence from paragraph 4.

There are not as many sequoias as there used to be, but people are working to preserve more of these incredible trees.

What is the correct way to write the underlined words?

- A used to be but people
- B used to be but, people
- C used to be, but, people
- D Leave as is.

- 18** Read this sentence from paragraph 5.

Although these trees are cut for lumber, many sequoias can be found in perctected groves within California's national parks.

What is the correct way to spell the underlined word?

- A pretected
- B protected
- C pratected
- D Leave as is.

- 19** Read this part of a sentence from paragraph 5.

Redwood National Park, in Northwestern California, has . . .

What is the correct way to write the underlined words?

- A Redwood National Park, in northwestern California
- B Redwood national park, in Northwestern California
- C Redwood national park, in northwestern California
- D Leave as is.

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Question Number	Correct Answer	Standard	Year of Test
1	<i>D</i>	6RL3.5	2003
2	<i>A</i>	6RL3.7	2003
3	<i>B</i>	6RL3.6	2003
4	<i>D</i>	6RL3.4	2003
5	<i>C</i>	6RW1.2	2003
6	<i>A</i>	6RC2.6	2003
7	<i>C</i>	6RC2.3	2003
8	<i>D</i>	6RC2.3	2003
9	<i>B</i>	6RW1.3	2003
10	<i>B</i>	6RW1.3	2003
11	<i>C</i>	6RW1.5	2003
12	<i>C</i>	6WS1.1	2003
13	<i>B</i>	6WS1.4	2003
14	<i>C</i>	6WS1.2.2	2003
15	<i>B</i>	6WS1.1	2003
16	<i>D</i>	6WC1.5	2003
17	<i>D</i>	6WC1.3	2003
18	<i>B</i>	6WC1.5	2003
19	<i>A</i>	6WC1.4	2003